

November 7, 2007 Testimony
Michael Rubyan, University of Michigan Student

Good Morning. I would like to thank Chairman Condino and the House Judiciary Committee for hearing testimony on this issue.

My name is Michael Rubyan and I am a pre-Med student majoring in film at the University of Michigan. I chose to attend U of M because its commitment to the life and biological sciences makes it a prime place for young scientists like me to pursue careers in this field.

My interest in stem cell research was inspired by a presentation given by Dr. Sean Morrison. I decided to explore the issues further and create a documentary film called *Life is for the Living* that covers stem cell research from four different perspectives, the people, the science, the politics, and the advocacy.

The many scientists we interviewed from such noted institutions as The University of Michigan, Harvard, The University of Wisconsin Madison, and the University of Utah, made it clear that pursuing all forms of stem cell research including embryonic stem cell research is crucial in the quest to find new cures and treatments for diseases and injuries.

As we traveled across the country interviewing families affected by many different diseases it became clear that disease does not discriminate. People of different ages, generations, races, and cultures were all impacted. Their passion and hope for new breakthroughs and scientific discoveries was powerful.

In addition to being a young filmmaker I am a student aspiring to become a physician. It is unacceptable to me that I might have to one day tell my patients that there could have been a cure or a better treatment but it was not pursued because Michigan laws prohibited it. Those of us seeking the best training for a career in the sciences will have to leave Michigan if Michigan continues to leave promising science behind.

Stem cell research and the laws in Michigan also touch me in a very personal way. My family has lived in Michigan for many years. My great grandmother suffered from Parkinson's Disease and now my grandmother is suffering from Alzheimer's. I believe that government must never stand in the way of providing its citizens with the best medical treatment made available through the most progressive scientific research including embryonic stem cell research.

Embryonic stem cell research offers real hope. Real hope for those afflicted with degenerative and incurable diseases, real hope for those living with debilitating injuries, real hope for those who never thought they would have a chance. I have been so moved by all of these people who fight for their lives every day. For the sake of those who might benefit from the research, and for the sake of all of us, please consider the citizens of Michigan and support lifesaving research by passing these bills.

Thank you.